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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KHARTOUM 001716

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BRUSSELS FOR FRAZER AND HUME, NSC FOR SHORTLEY

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TAGS: PGOV PREL SU

SUBJECT: DARFUR AND DPA IMPLEMENTATION ON THE EVE OF MINNI  
MINAWI'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON

Classified By: Charge Andrew Steinfeld for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

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¶1. (C) On the eve of Minni Minawi's visit to Washington, the security situation in Darfur is fragile, and DPA implementation is off to a slow start. The AU and AMIS are showing a disturbing lack of capacity and energy in security and political areas. The issue of transition to UN PKO still looms unresolved, adding uncertainty as to who will be responsible for DPA implementation in the medium to long term. The issue of the non-signatories has also hampered the functioning of key DPA cease-fire mechanisms. The security environment in Darfur continues to be tense, volatile, and unpredictable, characterized by intra-rebel fragmentation and fighting, with negative consequences for humanitarian work.

¶2. (C) In the absence of AU leadership and action, the U.S. has taken the lead in deploying people and resources to help shore up the AU effort and enhance SLM/A-Minawi's capacity to function. We are in the process of setting up offices for DPA implementation in Khartoum and North Darfur, and have sent military officers to boost AMIS's capacity. But much work remains, including ensuring the effective functioning of cease-fire and verification mechanisms in the field, and beginning the Darfur-Darfur dialogue.

¶3. (C) Our message to Minni should be three-fold: stay the course with the DPA despite all the evident political and security problems; eschew violence to the maximum extent possible; and, be as inclusive as possible in embracing other forces in Darfur. We, for our part, should reiterate the points made by the President in his letter to Minni on the eve of the signing of the DPA: that we will continue vigorously to support implementation of the agreement in order to attain peace and stability in Darfur. End Summary.

Three unresolved issues

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¶4. (C) Three unresolved issues are currently combining to slow down DPA implementation and exacerbate the security situation on the ground.

-- AU/AMIS lack of capacity and energy. In both security and political areas, the lack of capacity by the AU and AMIS vigorously to engage on DPA implementation and security on the ground constitute a huge drag on DPA

implementation. In Khartoum, a staff of two led by senior advisor Sam Ibok is attempting to organize implementation, while the official AU rep, Baba Gana Kingibe, has been out of Khartoum for weeks. Ibok has been provided no resources by Addis headquarters, leaving it up to donors (particularly the U.S.) to foot the bill for setting up offices, etc. In the field, the performance of the AMIS commander has been extremely weak, resulting in the non-functioning of the important Ceasefire Commission.

-- UN PKO transition. The unresolved issue of what follows AMIS is also a serious drag on AMIS's performance now. And although in conversations with Charge Hume, NCP leaders have shown some signs of flexibility towards security arrangements post-AMIS, in public and private, President Bashir never misses an opportunity to reiterate his fierce opposition to a UN force in Darfur. (Note: Today's meetings in Brussels - both bilateral and multilateral -- will shed more light on where this matter stands.)

-- Establishing broader adherence to the DPA. Minni Minawi's group remains the only signatory, with only a handful of others announcing their commitment to the DPA. Attempts to woo Abdel Wahid in Asmara seem to be flagging. Meanwhile, groups opposed to Minni and critical of the DPA are stirring up trouble on the ground.

Security: Fragmentation, Violence, and a weak AMIS

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15. (C) The security environment in Darfur continues to be tense, volatile, and unpredictable. There have been significant attacks against Minni's forces in an attempt to discredit the only movement signatory and

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to create a security environment that makes it impossible to implement the DPA. Although there had been a reduction in fighting throughout most of June, an estimated 18,000 new IDPs were created as a result of fighting between SLM factions the first week of July. In addition, the annual nomadic migration back to the north has begun. Territorial conflicts between tribes, herders, and farmers are common during the migration and can become violent; recent fighting in South Darfur between two Arab tribes resulted in over 240 casualties.

16. (C) The National Redemption Front (NRF), recently created from factions that rejected the DPA, continues attacks in northwest Darfur in order to increase its relevance in future negotiations and expand its base of operations. The NRF has publicly indicated its intent to destroy the basis for the DPA. Reports of Chadian reinforcements including possible Chadian regular army personnel mixed into the force crossing the border to support the NRF is a new factor. In central Darfur, SLM/A commanders who did not sign the DPA appear to be consolidating their positions, but may continue to attempt to take areas under Minni's control if they believe his forces are occupied against the NRF tied down further north.

17. (C) Minni will be under increased pressure from his commanders to mobilize fighters and regain lost territory regardless of the DPA provisions. NRF support from Chad may also provoke retaliation by his Zaghawa clan elements living in Chad. Minni strongly supports a UN mission replacing the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS). He faults AMIS's ineffectiveness and slow implementation of the DPA for much of the present fighting.

18. (C) AMIS continues to struggle with under resourced forces including troop strength, logistics, intelligence, mobility, and communications shortages. The AMIS ceasefire

commission has taken no action on 30 unresolved violations over the last several months. AMISQs lack of effectiveness is particularly telling in the IDP camps, where many camps have warned AMIS civilian police patrols to stay out or face attack by the IDP populations. Threats against AMIS from the non-signatory factions continue to escalate with more frequent hijackings and more restriction to AMISQs freedom of movement. Most of the population in Darfur does not believe that AMIS can achieve peace or effectively implement the DPA.

Effects of insecurity on humanitarian aid

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¶9. (C) The international humanitarian relief agencies view the security situation in Darfur as having deteriorated since the signing of the DPA in May. Sustained intra-SLA fighting has resulted in additional IDPs (18,000 in North Darfur in the past week) and decreased access to international assistance. The fighting has also resulted in continued brutal attacks on, and abuse of, women. There has been increased banditry and attacks on humanitarian workers, including the death of one. Operations have been curtailed in parts of North and South Darfur. USAID continues to be the single largest donor in Darfur, but UN and NGO partners report that, should fighting continue or increase, they will be forced to scale back their relief operations.

DPA Implementation slow to start: U.S. engaged

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¶10. (C) Due largely to AU's institutional weakness, DPA implementation has not begun in earnest. Although Minni has been appointed as senior assistant to the President, he has yet to come to Khartoum, and no other political issues have been tackled. The Government has reportedly submitted its janjaweed disarmament plan, but AMIS and the CFC have yet to evaluate it. There has been no movement on the Darfur-Darfur dialogue.

¶11. (C) In this context, the international donor community, led by the U.S., is having to kick-start the process. We have undertaken the following:

-- A surge team of 4-5 officers from S/CRS is helping the AU and the SLM increase their capacity and effectiveness

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in Khartoum and el Fasher, North Darfur.

-- One person from S/CRS is directly supporting Minni in the field and pushing AMIS to be more effective.

-- Three military officers are being deployed to AMIS to support headquarters activities and to assist on verification of DPA security arrangements, including violations of the DPA.

-- We are in the process of standing up two offices for the joint use of the AU and the SLM in Khartoum and el Fasher.

-- USAID/OTI is supporting local organizations in the field to hold focused discussions among academics, civil society leaders, and IDP leaders on the DPA, and distributing copies of the agreement to promote greater understanding of its content. OTI also commissioned a comprehensive summary of the DPA in Arabic, Fur, Zaghawa, Massalit, and other tribal languages. (The UK is taking the lead on media programming for the DPA in Darfur.)

-- We are planning on implementing some quick impact projects using funds likely to be apportioned for Darfur from the 1207 account.

Other donors seem willing to engage and to spend money, but

the lack of organizational skills by the AU has slowed the collective effort down.

The Darfur Joint Assessment Mission: Economic recovery

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¶12. (C) One area where there has been some progress is in organizing the donors for the significant economic aid and recovery effort associated with DPA implementation. The Darfur JAM was launched at a meeting in The Hague in June. The core coordinating group, chaired by the Netherlands, and comprised of the GNU, SLM/A-Minawi, the UN, the IBRD, and major donors met to provide overall guidance to the UN and the World Bank as they organize technical assessments of Track I (early recovery) and II (reconstruction and development). A follow-on workshop was held for members of the technical teams and the parties to the agreement. The UN will begin technical assessments of early recovery needs by late July, with teams to be based in Nyala. USAID is contributing a field officer to the UN team as well as sharing sector analyses already undertaken by it.

Message to Minni: Stay the course, Eschew violence, Be inclusive

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¶13. (C) Minni arrives in Washington at a time when there is great fragility with regard to the DPA, and continued turmoil on the ground. Three messages will be key:

-- Stay the course. Minni should be strongly encouraged to maintain his commitment to the agreement despite the evident difficulties in its implementation, and instability on the ground. He will need to show fortitude and patience, but should be assured of the international community's support, led by us.

-- Eschew violence. Minni should understand that he cannot be seen to be instigating violence in the field, particularly engaging in any activities seen to be violating the rights of civilians, especially women. In return, we should tell him that we will work to improve AMIS's capabilities (particularly with regard to investigation of ceasefire violations), and continue to push aggressively for UN transition.

-- Be inclusive. Minni fully understands the tenuous nature of support for the agreement among many groups in Darfur. He should be as inclusive as possible when it comes time to fill political positions. At the same time, we should tell him that we will work to ensure that the Darfur-Darfur dialogue is begun as soon as possible.

Reiterate the President's commitment to our one partner

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¶14. (C) On May 4, President Bush wrote Minni and urged that he exert leadership so that an agreement could be reached. Minni did so, and has continued to be resolute in the face of enormous difficulties. We should use his Washington visit to reconfirm that we stand by our reciprocal commitments, which are to fully support implementation of the agreement and to continue to work energetically for peace, reconstruction,

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and reconciliation in Darfur.

STEINFELD